

**RESOLUTION ON RENAMING THE COLLEGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES AS  
THE COLLEGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT**

**WHEREAS**, the College of Natural Resources at Virginia Tech is held in the highest esteem by national and international peers for its learning, discovery, and engagement programming, the college has a 17-year history as an independent unit at Virginia Tech, and the college last changed its name in 1999 to better reflect the evolution of the college over time; and

**WHEREAS**, the college faculty, administration, and constituency groups wish to support the future evolution and growth of the College of Natural Resources, leveraging the college to the greater good of the Virginia Tech campus, faculty, and students; and

**WHEREAS**, the College of Natural Resources represents varied disciplines, degrees, and research endeavors that encompass globally the depth and breadth of the study of natural resources and the environment, including geographical information systems, geospatial and pursuit of environmental analysis, ecosystems, and environmental resource management; and

**WHEREAS**, the College of Natural Resources is home to the Virginia Water Resources Research Center, recognizing water to be a natural resource of critical importance to the environment and global environmental sustainability; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has recently changed the name of programs within the USDA to Natural Resources and Environment; and

**WHEREAS**, the newly organized and named National Institute of Food and Agriculture within the USDA has identified strategic programming under the name Environment and Natural Resources; and

**WHEREAS**, other leading colleges of natural resources have recently been renamed to be inclusive of the term environment; and

**WHEREAS**, referring to the environment in the college name will bring broader recognition of its contributions and aspirations among prospective students, research sponsors, and the general public;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the College of Natural Resources be authorized to change the college name to the College of Natural Resources and Environment, effective first summer session 2010.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the above resolution renaming the College of Natural Resources as the College of Natural Resources and Environment be approved.

June 7, 2010

## **RATIONALE FOR NAME CHANGE — THE COLLEGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

Dean Paul Winistorfer, June 2010

Discussed within the context of strategic planning, the college leadership agreed unanimously to recommend that the name of the college be changed to the College of Natural Resources and Environment. This proposed name change aligns the college with current and proposed academic programs and positions the college to take advantage of opportunities in emerging scholarship.

The new name increases the college's relevance and sets the stage for additional collaboration with colleagues in natural resources and the environment. The renamed College of Natural Resources and the Environment acknowledges the college's roots while increasing its potential for collaborations and expanded opportunities in learning, discovery, and engagement. The name change strengthens the college's core business in natural resources and the environment.

Faculty, students, staff, and alumni, as well as agency, association, and other key stakeholders have been consulted about the name change. All have been overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the proposal. The name change has generated excitement and interest among stakeholders and has leveraged mutual interests and efforts to magnify the college's impact.

The new name will assist in recruitment of the very best faculty and students. The proposed name change reflects the interest generated by a new major in the sustainability of natural resources and environment and aligns well with the college's nationally recognized Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation. With a new name comes a commitment to examine the relevance and content of current academic programs to ensure their alignment in a fast-changing global arena. The college will soon propose the establishment of a meteorology degree (currently unavailable at any commonwealth institution) to compliment its growing role in the broader arena of environment.

The new college name will attract a diverse clientele to support the college, open doors of opportunity, and yield additional external support to grow its programs, faculty, staff, students, and resources.

"Environment" is an umbrella term that the college can embrace for future opportunities in sustainability programs. Many of the college's federal sponsors are inclusive of the terms "natural resources" and "environment." For example, the natural resources and environment mission of the U.S. Department of Agriculture includes the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which are the primary public and private land agencies charged with conserving, maintaining, and improving natural resources.

The addition of geography as an area of inquiry within the college means that more and

diverse environments are being investigated. Biogeographers study invasive species, and tree line movement upslope, paleoecologists study historic climates and severe weather events, and cultural geographers make sense of urban spaces and political ecology. The new name embraces the college's geography interests more completely than before.

A brief history on the evolution of the college includes the receipt of college status 17 years ago and a name change 10 years ago.

### **Historical Names and Dates in the Life of the College of Natural Resources at Virginia Tech**

1925	First Extension forester hired
1959	Forestry and Wildlife Conservation group renamed Department of Forestry and Wildlife, within College of Agriculture
1969	Department becomes a Division of Forestry and Wildlife within the College of Agriculture
1972	Departmental reorganization—Department of Forestry and Forest Products; Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences established
1976	School of Forestry and Wildlife Resources established within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
1979	Department of Wood Science and Forest Products established
1993	College status awarded—College of Forestry and Wildlife Resources (three departments)
2000	Name changed to College of Natural Resources
2003	National Capital Natural Resources graduate program—master's of Natural Resources (MNR)
2004	Department of Geography joins the college
2005	Virginia Water Resources Research Center moves to the college

In summary, it is appropriate to envision the future of the college and its collaborative efforts in natural resources and the environment. The College of Natural Resources and Environment properly reflects the college's focus on the sustainability of our planet, our resources, and our environment.